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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 22 September 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to our previous letter, dated 14 September 2015 (A/ES-10/690-S/2015/707), I must continue to draw your urgent attention to the dangerously rising tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem. The illegal policies and the constant provocations and incitement by Israel, the occupying Power, and its extremist settlers against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy places, especially at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound (Haram al-Sharif), continue to exacerbate tensions and religious sensitivities between the Palestinian people and the occupying Power and risk further destabilization of an already very fragile situation on the ground.

Having said the above, today we bring to your immediate attention the chances for the situation to deteriorate even further, as Israel, the occupying Power, intensifies its incitement and provocation as Palestinian Muslims prepare to commemorate Eid al-Adha, which starts on Thursday, 24 September 2015. In that regard, while the international community, including the Security Council, has called upon the occupying Power to exercise restraint, refrain from provocative actions and rhetoric, and uphold the historic status quo at Haram al-Sharif — in word and in practice, the occupying Power, along with its extremist settlers, has done the exact opposite. In fact, the Prime Minister of Israel has ordered that additional checkpoints be erected throughout Occupied East Jerusalem, as well as calling for the deployment of an additional 800 reservists, along with thousands of so-called border police, in the city. In addition, as of yesterday, Israeli occupying forces have imposed restrictions on the entry of Muslims to Al-Aqsa compound, closing all but three of the compound's gates, as well as allowing only men over 40 years of age to enter the compound, all while completely barring women from entering. Israel's latest provocations, incitements and violations of the Palestinian people's human rights, including their right to worship, will surely do nothing to "restore calm", but rather create the perfect recipe for clashes and violence to ensue and intensify.

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Clearly, the situation is still extremely tense following last week's fierce attacks by Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers against Palestinian worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. During those attacks, the occupying forces used excessive force to prevent the entry of Palestinian worshippers and caused serious injuries to hundreds of worshippers through their use of tear gas, stun grenades and rubber-coated bullets. Moreover, the excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians caused clashes to erupt in many East Jerusalem neighbourhoods and villages, in which many more Palestinian civilians were injured, including Saly Yousif Muhessien, 13 years of age, who was injured when she was shot in the neck with a rubber-coated steel bullet. Such gruesome violations against children will only continue as the occupying Power continues to enjoy a culture of impunity, which has shielded its forces from being held accountable for crimes that they have committed against Palestinian civilians, including children. This culture of impunity is evident in the outrageous request by the Israeli Prime Minister, calling upon Israel's Attorney General to "allow" occupying forces to employ open-fire regulations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including sniper fire and the use of rifles fitted with sniper scopes, at Palestinian stone throwers. In addition to the above, over the past week Israeli occupying forces have also detained more than 150 Palestinians, the majority ranging from 13 to 20 years of age.

We continue to reiterate that all such illegal Israeli actions at Haram al-Sharif and throughout the rest of Occupied East Jerusalem are in violation of the numerous relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a cessation of all Israeli policies and measures aimed at altering the character, legal status and demography of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and for respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of its obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits such actions.

Moreover, we believe that all such acts of incitement against holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as acts of the ongoing and deliberate provocations against the Palestinian people by the occupying Power, whether by the Government of Israel, its occupying forces or its illegal settlers, warrant serious and immediate attention by the international community, including by the Security Council, in line with its primary duty under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. We call upon the international community to act with urgency and responsibility, especially in the light of the upcoming Eid al-Adha holiday, to ensure the de-escalation of this perilous situation in Occupied East Jerusalem and to bring a halt to the occupying Power's violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and to immediately withdraw its forces from around Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Before concluding, I regret also to inform you of the killing today of Hadeel Al-Hashlamon, 18 years of age, who was shot three times by Israeli occupying forces at a checkpoint in Al-Khalil (Hebron) and left to bleed on the pavement for approximately 30 minutes before she received treatment. Also today, Diaa' Al-Talahmah, 21 years of age, was killed during clashes with Israeli occupying forces in the village of Khursa, near Dora in southern Al-Khalil. These latest killings are only two of the hundreds of examples of deliberate and brutal killings by Israeli occupying forces, which continue to further heighten tensions and contribute to fomenting deep anger and agitation among the Palestinian people, as they confirm Israel's total disregard for Palestinian lives. The international community must take

measures to ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, is held accountable for all such crimes and is compelled to cease all of its violations against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 553 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 14 September 2015 (A/ES-10/690-S/2015/707), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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Letter dated 24 September 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-fourth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2015.

With respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, I note that five of the seven hangars have now been verified by OPCW as having been destroyed and that all five underground structures have been verified as destroyed. I likewise note the prevailing security situation that is impeding access to the final two hangars, as well as discussions between OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the contractor and the Syrian National Authority with regard to the procurement of additional explosives required for the destruction of the two hangars. The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team has now undertaken its eleventh visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, during which it continued technical consultations and interviews, including discussions on the analytical results of samples taken during previous site visits by the Team.

As I stated in my previous letter (S/2015/668), the activities of the OPCW fact-finding mission that is investigating allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are continuing. Following the completion of this work, the findings will be submitted to the OPCW Director-General, who will share them with the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. I take note of the intention of the Director-General to also include them in the monthly reports that are submitted to the Security Council.

On 27 August 2015, and in response to the request contained in Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), I submitted to the Council recommendations, including elements of the terms of reference, regarding the establishment and operation of an OPCW-United Nations joint investigative mechanism. On 9 September 2015, I then submitted a letter reaffirming several of those elements. In response to the letter of 10 September 2015 addressed to me by the President of the Security Council, authorizing the above-referenced recommendations, I have moved swiftly to appoint Virginia Gamba (Argentina) to head the independent three-member panel that will lead the Mechanism. Other activities, including the recruitment of core staff, are under way to ensure that the Mechanism is fully operational as soon as is feasible.

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It is my hope that the Joint Investigative Mechanism will serve as both a means to identify those responsible for the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as a deterrent to those who would contemplate their use. It must be clearly understood, through actions as well as through words, that there can be no justification for the use of such weapons, that such use is wholly unacceptable and that those responsible will be held accountable by the international community.

I would be grateful if you could urgently bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Annex

Letter dated 23 September 2015 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).

4. This, the twenty-fourth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 August to 22 September 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress within the reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) While there were no new destruction activities at the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, five of the seven aircraft hangars have now been verified by the Secretariat as destroyed, with the latest being verified as destroyed on 8 September 2015. Two hangars remain inaccessible due to the security situation. At the time of reporting, the procurement of the additional explosives required for the destruction of those hangars was being discussed between the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the contractor, and the Syrian National Authority. As reported previously, the Secretariat has verified all five underground structures as destroyed.

(b) On 17 September 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its twenty-second monthly report (EC-80/P/NAT.3, dated 17 September 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. Significant progress has been made in destroying all the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, which were removed from its territory in 2014. A combined total of 98.8% of all declared chemical weapons has been verified as destroyed, which includes the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic, 100% of the Category 1 chemicals, and 93.7% of the Category 2 chemicals. Also, facilities in Finland and Germany have destroyed all effluents produced by the neutralisation process of sulfur mustard and DF that took place on board the United States vessel MV Cape Ray. A total of 48.7% of the Category 2 chemical hydrogen fluoride (HF) has been destroyed. Having now ensured the safe storage of the badly corroded HF cylinders, Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America is making the final preparations to implement the selected technical solution that will allow for the safe processing of the remaining cylinders and the destruction of the HF contained inside. The Secretariat will continue to brief States Parties in The Hague on this activity, which is expected to commence in October 2015 and to be completed before the end of the year.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

7. Two OPCW staff members were deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic as at the cut-off date of this report. In view of the need to procure additional explosives to destroy the last two CWPFs, it is expected that the completion date for the destruction of the last CWPF will be extended to 31 October 2015. The tripartite agreement between UNOPS, the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the contribution agreement between the OPCW and UNOPS, which supports the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, will be amended accordingly.

8. In accordance with the tripartite agreement, a meeting of the Steering Committee attended by representatives of the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic was held in Beirut on 27 August 2015. During the meeting, options for procuring additional explosives for the destruction of the remaining two CWPFs were discussed. The meeting also addressed the modalities required to ensure the security of the remote monitoring systems that have been installed at four underground structures and will operate for five years from the date of destruction of the CWPFs.

9. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

10. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have maintained their ongoing cooperation on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014). During its eleventh visit to the Syrian Arab Republic, which occurred from 28 August to 12 September 2015, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its technical consultations and interviews with key principals from

the Syrian chemical weapons programme, including discussions with the Syrian authorities on the analytical results of the samples taken during the DAT's previous site visits. Additional samples taken during the DAT's eleventh visit were handed over to Syrian National Authority representatives in Damascus and will be transported to the OPCW in the near future for dispatch to designated laboratories for analysis.

Supplementary resources

11. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remain unchanged from the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

12. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) is continuing its work involving the analysis of information collected during its latest missions. Upon completion of this work, the findings will be submitted to the Director-General, who will subsequently share the results with States Parties and also include them in the monthly reports that are submitted to the United Nations Security Council, as required under EC-M-48/DEC.1.

13. As required under United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) on the establishment of a United Nations-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, on 27 August 2015 the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council his recommendations, formulated in coordination with the Director-General. On 10 September 2015, the Security Council authorised those recommendations, including elements of Terms of Reference. Organisational and other arrangements necessary for the speedy establishment and full functioning of the Joint Investigative Mechanism are currently under way.

Conclusion

14. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the destruction of the two remaining aircraft hangars. The DAT and the FFM will also continue their work in the Syrian Arab Republic, while arrangements are being made to make the Joint Investigative Mechanism fully operational.